

community-based, not-for-profit



John Muir Health donor and former Board Member, Don Ritchey, takes part in the ceremony by signing the beam before it is raised and placed into position.



## BRIEFINGS

# Beam Signing Ceremony

## JOHN MUIR HEALTH INSTILLS TOPPING OUT TRADITION WITH DONORS

The practice of tree topping a new building can be traced to the ancient Scandinavian religious rite of placing a tree atop a new building to appease the tree-dwelling spirits displaced in its construction.

“In building construction, topping out signals that the structure has reached its height,” explains Michael Monaldo, Sr. Vice President, Facilities Development, John Muir Health, adding, “and it is traditionally held when the last beam is placed atop the structure.”

Donors who provided leadership support for the new Cancer Pavilion signed the painted white beam before the ceremony, providing a sense of

pride and ownership in the future state-of-the-art cancer facility.

“It was truly remarkable to watch and witness,” says Dr. Henry Fourcade. “As a retired physician, I am very proud to be a part of John Muir Health’s newest health care initiative—my family has been deeply and extensively affected by cancer.”

In keeping with tradition, a small evergreen tree was placed on one end of the beam and an American flag on the other, symbolizing growth, good luck, and pride.

The Cancer Pavilion is scheduled to open in February 2024.

## LEADERSHIP MESSAGE



**Nevin E. Kessler**  
PRESIDENT,  
JOHN MUIR HEALTH FOUNDATION

As I enter my ninth month as President of the John Muir Health Foundation, I am incredibly humbled by the kindness I have received from you, our board members, my John Muir Health colleagues, and the hard-working Foundation team. I feel more at home every day and am taking advantage of all that Northern California has to offer.

In May, I had the opportunity to present a “state of the union address” to the John Muir Health Board of Directors. I highlighted the generosity of our donors whose gifts totaled nearly \$100 million for the 10-year period 2012-2021. Many of the advancements in technology, programs, and facilities at John Muir Health during that time were made possible by philanthropic gifts from grateful patients and their families.

What’s most exciting to me is what we can do working together to build an even stronger culture of philanthropy at John Muir Health. It is critically important that we secure the financial resources necessary to support one of the finest health systems in California, dedicated to providing exceptional health care, with compassion, to all the residents of our service area.

The John Muir Health Foundation raised a record \$14.9 million in 2020. With three months to go in 2022, I am delighted to share the news that we have already raised \$24.9 million. The future is bright, and I look forward to sharing great news with you in upcoming editions of the newsletter.

If we haven’t had the chance to connect, I hope to have the opportunity to speak with you over the phone or meet you in person very soon. As you may have heard, we are beginning to hold in-person events after a 2 ½ year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The annual flagship *Celebrate John Muir Health!* gala will be held on Saturday, November 5th. You’ll find more information about the gala and much more in the following pages. Enjoy!

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## IMPACT UPDATE

# Donor Support Advances Cancer Care Close to Home

According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 42,230 new cases of liver cancer will be diagnosed in 2022. Of those, approximately 71.5% (30,230) will succumb to the disease.

To defy those statistics, and with generous donor support, the cancer care program at John Muir Health is now providing leading-edge treatment options to patients requiring Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary (HPB) surgery. HPB surgery is a subspecialty of surgery that treats benign and malignant diseases of the liver, pancreas, gallbladder, and bile ducts. It is very complex and requires specialized surgical equipment and a high degree of physician training, expertise, and skill.

In 2021, John Muir Health welcomed Dr. Carlos Corvera, Chief of Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery Program at UCSF Health, who brought his expertise in HPB surgery to the John Muir Health, Walnut Creek Medical Center.

Dr. Corvera spoke at a recent John Muir Health event, explaining that “UCSF has enjoyed a terrific relationship and partnership with John Muir Health. It can be a burden for cancer patients to travel from the East Bay to San Francisco for treatment. Now we will provide the same high-quality care locally.”

*HPB surgery is a subspecialty of surgery specific to benign and malignant diseases of the liver, pancreas, gallbladder and bile ducts.*



**Dr. Carlos Corvera, Chief of Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery Program at the UCSF Medical Center.**

**Donor funds were pooled together to purchase two pieces of equipment necessary to support HPB surgery. Each of these state-of-the-art technologies will dramatically improve outcomes for patients with HPB disease...close to home!**

- The BK Ultrasound is an advanced real-time image guidance system. Ultrasound probes used for this piece of equipment are designed to look specifically at the liver and for all HPB surgeries. If done without ultrasound, a mass might not be removed, and/or healthy tissue could accidentally be removed. Other probes are specifically designed to stage rectal cancers and will be used by colorectal surgeons at John Muir Health, Walnut Creek Medical Center.
- The Neuwave Microwave Ablation System is the newest minimally-invasive surgical method that destroys liver tumors using heat-generated microwave energy.





Oncology Nurse Navigators, (L-R) Lynn Rodegard, R.N., B.S.N.; Christine Oeur, N.P.; Aileen De Mucha Flores, M.S.N., R.N., C.N.S., O.C.N.; Shellie Campos, N.P.; Sheila Marquez, R.N.

## Oncology Nurse Navigators

### Q & A with Oncology Nurse Navigators, Shellie Campos, N.P., and Sheila Marquez, R.N.

#### Q: What does it mean to be an Oncology Nurse Navigator (ONN) at John Muir Health?

Being an ONN at John Muir Health is a rewarding role that allows us to interact directly with patients and their family members. ONN's offer patients individualized assistance in the coordination of care and communication between the health care team, family and care providers.

#### Q: What is a typical day as a John Muir Health Oncology Nurse Navigator?

While there are no typical days as an ONN there are routine activities:

- Prepare for and attend weekly tumor board meetings;
- Provide the patient with community and online cancer support resources;
- Counsel on medication side-effects;
- Coordinate custom diagnosis and treatment plan from screening to surgery;
- Collaborate with inter-departmental colleagues.



Oncology Nurse Navigator, Sheila Marquez, R.N.



Oncology Nurse Navigator, Shellie Campos, R.N.

*My nurse navigator helped me immensely through my cancer journey. She was there to listen and guide me, and fully understood what I was going through.*  
—Vanessa Lopez

#### Q: What is the best part of your work as an ONN?

Making a positive impact and supporting improved quality of life for our patients. But, the best part of our work is witnessing the relief they feel when we connect.

#### Q: Why is it helpful for a patient to have an ONN?

For some patients, the trauma of hearing the word cancer is paralyzing. It can be overwhelming—a patient isn't always sure what to do next or where to find answers or resources. Some patients just need someone to explain what their physician has already described about their diagnosis and what to expect with treatment. Many times, just hearing a calm and positive voice makes all the difference! Oncology Nurse Navigators provide the education and emotional support to guide cancer patients through their journey.

## OUT AND ABOUT

Follow the QR Code using your smart phone camera to learn more about the joint UCSF—John Muir Health Cancer Network.



January 2022

## Magic in action!

As we approach the first year of the construction of the new John Muir Health Cancer Pavilion, we look forward to seeing some of you in-person at the ninth annual *Celebrate John Muir Health!* gala in support of the new John Muir Health Cancer Pavilion. For more information, please visit [www.givehealthjmh.org/events/annual-gala](http://www.givehealthjmh.org/events/annual-gala).



April 2022



September 2022

## LEAVE YOUR LEGACY

# Everyone is Entitled to a FreeWill

October is best known for Halloween but did you know that it is also National Estate Planning Awareness Month? In between decorating the house and carving pumpkins, consider taking 20 minutes to care for your family by creating or updating your estate plans. With FreeWill's simple online tool, you can complete your legally valid will, trust, power of attorney, and living will, without the stress and high cost of legal expenses. FreeWill's easy to complete forms make creating a legacy a reality for everyone. And, it is 100% FREE and is fully-accessible to all!

### The benefits of an estate plan are:

- Provides Peace of Mind
- Avoids Probate
- Provides Clear Instructions for Others to Follow
- Reduces Conflict/Misunderstanding among Family and Friends
- Facilitates Care of Minors
- Creates Opportunity for Giving to your Favorite Charities

Unfortunately, approximately 50% of Americans do not have an estate plan in place that allows orderly distribution of assets to their family, friends, and charities. If you have been thinking about creating your estate plans, please visit:

[www.freewill.com/johnmuirhealthfoundation](http://www.freewill.com/johnmuirhealthfoundation)

or scan our QR Code to discover how simple planning can be.



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The Romero Family Reunion

## Create Your Own Legacy of Giving

Charitable estate planning can be financially beneficial for families and individuals of various ages and income levels.

Find out what planning a legacy gift to John Muir Health can do for you and your loved ones—now and in the future.

### Gifts John Muir Health Can Use Today

- Appreciated Securities
- Real Estate
- Donor Advised Funds (DAF)

### Gifts That Can Pay You Income

- Charitable Gift Annuity
- Charitable Remainder Trust

### Gifts That Take Effect After Your Lifetime

- Bequest
- Retained Life Estate
- Charitable Beneficiary Designations
  - Life Insurance
  - Retirement Plan





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## WHY WE GIVE

# Envisioning a better future

When Linda began experiencing problems with her vision in 1995, she visited her local health care facility, John Muir Health. “We had just moved back to Northern California from Canada,” says Linda, “and we were vaguely familiar with John Muir Health’s excellent reputation. We connected with now-retired neurosurgeon, Dr. Paul Chodroff, who would remove a benign tumor that had surrounded an optic nerve,” Linda adds.

“The experience wasn’t just ‘excellent,’ says Linda’s husband, Jack. “It was extraordinary. Dr. Chodroff and his team performed an intensive surgery both expertly and impeccably. We could not have had a better experience. Linda spent one week in the Neuro Intensive Care Unit where the nursing team went above and beyond our expectations and were very kind and compassionate.”

“Dr. Chodroff and the entire John Muir Health care team, saved my vision,” Linda beams. “While I was very grateful for the incredible care I received, I was also intrigued by the

*In the blink of an eye,  
something happens by  
chance—when you least  
expect it—sets you on  
a course that you never  
planned, into a future you  
never imagined.*

—Nicholas Sparks



culture—the core values and corporate ethos at John Muir Health—and I wanted to be a part of it!”

Linda began volunteering at John Muir Health’s Walnut Creek Medical Center shortly after her recovery and has only just recently retired (though she still volunteers at The Wig Source by John Muir Health).

“I can honestly say that over the past twenty-seven years of volunteering at John Muir Health, I am still enamored with the organization—its people, programs and services,” Linda explains.

And we can’t leave Jack out of the story! He currently serves on the John Muir Health Board of Directors and is the Investment Sub-Committee Chair.

Jack also served on the John Muir Health Foundation Board of Directors for nine years; two as the Chair.

Today, Linda and Jack are keeping their eyes on John Muir Health’s newest venture, the UCSF-John Muir Health Cancer Center. And, in fact, were one of the first to make a substantial leadership gift to the Cancer Pavilion. “This state-of-the-art facility is critically important,” says Jack. “Receiving a cancer diagnosis is frightening. But, the ability to treat a cancer patient under the roof of a world-class facility with the very brightest oncology physicians, nurses and staff, and the latest technology, will have a tremendous impact on our community.”